

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CAUGHT IN MESH OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY DETAILS

After two days marked more by discussion than by decision, the Kyodan Executive Committee adjourned its two-day meeting Friday, September 17, agreeing to come together again October 14-15 to deal with a host of unresolved agenda items. It spent the better part of the two days trying to pull things together in preparation for the coming General Assembly, which will be held November 16-18 at the Kowakien Hotel in Hakone.

Approved for recommendation to the Assembly was the proposal for independent management of the pension fund, under a Board of Pensions directly responsible to the General Assembly and Executive Committee. (The fund presently has assets of over ¥800 million). The financial reports for 1975 and budget for 1977 were approved for presentation to the Assembly.

A paper written by Moderator TODA Isuke, to be delivered at the Assembly, set off lively debate. It will be rewritten incorporating points made in the discussion and will be presented to the Assembly as the Moderator's Personal Report.

The question of the qualifications necessary to be a General Assembly delegate triggered a round of confrontation. Several districts had elected laypersons who were not members of their local church boards, a violation of the Kyodan regulations. Where a delegation's qualifications could not be verified, the person was disqualified and the district will be notified to send an alternate. In the case of one district, a minister without assignment was elected, and this was questioned. After the defeat of two motions, one to disqualify his election, the other to refer his case to the Faith and Order Commission, his election stood.

Moderator Toda presented the nominations of delegates-at-large, after consultation with the General Assembly Preparations Committee--30 voting delegates and 189 non-voting delegates. The large number of non-voting delegates is due in part to the failure of the Osaka and Tokyo districts to meet and elect their own delegates. Qualifications of some of the nominees were questioned for a number of reasons, and clarification sought as to the basis for their selection. A large number nominated were from Osaka and Tokyo. It was noticed that no women were on the list of voting delegates-at-large. In the midst of the discussion of delegates-at-large, time ran out. To give further consideration to these matters and to Executive Committee proposals to the General Assembly, it was decided to convene the second, special pre-Assembly Executive Committee meeting in mid-October.

### KYODAN EXPRESSES SOLIDARITY WITH KOREAN CHRISTIANS

General Secretary TAKAI Kiyoshi represented the Kyodan in the mission sent to Korea by the Special Emergency Committee on Korea-Japan Relations when

sentences of from 2 to 8 years in prison were given Korean Christians who signed the March 1 Declaration seeking the restoration of freedom and democracy.

Japanese Christians expressed concern through petitions, telegrams, prayer meetings and a 48-hour hunger strike by 13 persons at Suki-yabashi Square in Tokyo.

**STYLE NOTE:** Beginning with this issue, in printing personal names, the KYODAN NEWS LETTER will, insofar as possible, follow the style used in the country of the person referred to: WATANABE Keiko, Guenther SCHNEISS, PARK In Suk, Eleanor MILLER.



## THE CHURCH — no monolithic entity

*The first ASIAN ECUMENICAL CENTRE Course was held June 1 through August 8. Two Japanese participated in it--the Rev. ARAI Toshitsugu, former chaplain of International Christian University, and OKADA Noriko, director of the Kagawa Memorial Center in Higashi Komagata Church, Tokyo. Tosh was responsible for organizing and directing the course in his position as Education Secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia; Noriko was one of 22 enrollees. We are grateful to LEE Soo Jin, CCA Communications Secretary, for this story.*

The first AEC course was radically different from the usual Asian conference or seminar. Rather than meeting for a few days, it extended over 10 weeks. Instead of being confined to the boundaries of a conference venue, it combined deep sharing among course members with immersion into specific situations in Asia.

The month of June was spent at Trinity College in Singapore, in intensive probing and mutual discussion of what the mission of the church in Asia means. Few people had expected that this would demand so much of self-exposure and dialogue. Many had come with the illusion that the church is a monolithic entity in which consensus abounds and where conflict is to be eschewed rather than welcomed. But in the exchange of national situation reports, all illusions about a conflict-free understanding of the Church's mission in Asia were dispelled. New and more comprehensive understanding of the cultural and social factors shaping the historical development of the church dawned slowly but surely.

During July participants plunged into month-long live-in experiences in slum dwellings in Bangkok and Manila, rural areas in Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka, and the concrete jungle of Hong Kong.

Noriko found herself, along with Lyndal BORRIE from New Zealand, in the sweltering heat of Lahore and Karachi in Pakistan. Staying with Christian families and visiting Church-related projects, both Noriko and Lyndal sought to discover what the church and society situations in Pakistan had in common with those of Japan and New Zealand.

If Noriko was looking for similarity, there was none to find, for while Pakistan is suffering from the ills of a feudalistic social system, Japan is facing the consequences of aggressive capitalism in the form of pollution and nascent militarism.

For many of the course members it was a relief to return in August to the tree-shaded environs of Trinity College. Stories of culture shock were the order of the day as they shared highlights and lowlights of their live-in experiences. "It provided guidelines from reality in contrast to the ideal which often colors ecumenical discussions," commented a Filipino participant.

"The main difficulty was how to relate the problems of poverty, which arise from very different circumstances in Pakistan, to the social and ecological problems which we face in Japan," said Noriko. "Throughout the course, I felt like those of us from the more materially developed Asian countries, like Australia, New Zealand and Japan, were made to feel as though our countries had fewer social problems compared to the less affluent Asian Countries. There was little understanding of what pollution means to many course participants."

Noriko had difficulty--as she had expected--in understanding the babble of voices of participants when she arrived. However, it was not so much the English language in itself, but rather the different accents in which English is spoken in various parts of Asia. Practically everyone had to adjust their hearing mechanisms to cope with the Australian English, Thai English, Indian English, and so on.

However, the real problem of communication was that difficult process of understanding and accepting each other's theological and political views regarding the nature, scope and methods of effecting change in Church and society.

Many words, sometimes bordering on rhetoric were exchanged among course participants. But words without relationships and understandings are meaningless. Commented Tosh, "It is gratifying to observe that during the course relationships and understandings emerged through the sharing of both conflict and consensus situations."



## SEEKING THE GROWTH AND MATURITY OF THE CHURCH

## ---The First National Conference of Pastors' Wives

One hundred eight pastors' wives from twelve districts gathered at Tozanso, Gotemba, on August 30-31 to worship, study and discuss their common problems. The Committee of Pastors' Wives was organized by the National Federation of Kyodan Women Societies in the spring of 1976. For some time many have had the dream of a fellowship meeting on the national level. The attendance showed the good response.

"Human Relations in Local Churches" was the theme of the conference. The guest speaker, Dr. AKABOSHI Susumu, a Christian psychiatrist, characterized the Japanese Christian's faith as being of the "dependency type" whereas the Western Christian's faith is of the "self-love type." Both have limitations which should be overcome by the individual's encounter with Jesus Christ on the Cross and in the Resurrection.

Mrs. HAYASHI Toshiko, who is Executive Secretary of NFKWS, a laywoman and wife of a layman, presented some issues related to pastors' wives.

The first is that pastors' wives are ordinary human beings, the same as other lay Christians, with their shortcomings as well as their talents. The stereotype of the pastor's wife as somebody "behind" the pastor and the church, who ought to bear every-

thing in silence but be willing to help others with a smile all the time, should be questioned.

Secondly, a pastor's wife has a unique place and role in relation to the pastor. Her wisdom, faith and love are needed in their private life.

The third problem is a financial one. According to research conducted by the NFKWS, housing conditions are generally very poor with little privacy. To supplement the needs of the family, many pastors' wives have to "work." The average clergyman's salary does not allow the children to have higher education. The laity in each local church should face the problem more seriously and more positive measures should also be taken at the district and national levels to help financially weaker churches.

There were also ten missionary wives present. They expressed appreciation for being able to attend since there is little opportunity for them to have fellowship with other Japanese Christians and co-workers beyond their own local congregations.

A careful followup study will be the important task of the committee so that these findings may contribute to the real growth of the church--"the progress of the Gospel" throughout the country.

## B-R-I-D-G-E O-V-E-R T-R-O-U-B-L-E-D W-A-T-E-R-S

In the rural village of Piam, about two hours north of Seoul, Korea, by bus, thirty Korean university students and twelve Japanese students and youth lived together, worked together and studied the Bible together for a week early in August, reaching various levels of communication. The Korean students were primarily from Songam Church in Seoul, the Japanese from Tokyo Kita sub-district.

Two participants, IGARASHI Tadahiko and KIM Shinchul, have shared their impressions with us. We begin below with Mr. Igarashi's comments, which set forth the schedule, and follow with the reflections of Miss Kim. Mr. Igarashi is a second-year medical student, Miss Kim a fourth-year student majoring in geography.

## IGARASHI TADAHIKO:

Our daily schedule began at 6:00 in the morning: running and calisthenics, morning prayers, breakfast. In the morning for three hours we had Bible study and discussion based on it. In the afternoon we were divided into groups for work projects--painting the walls of the church, repairing the road, spraying the fields around the town, conducting a summer school for the

village children, preparing meals for the campers.

There was a variety of evening programs: self-introductions, discussions, worship, a recreation program for the townspeople, pantomime summaries of the Bible study.

We brought young people from the troops stationed nearby for the Wednesday night service. To invite people to the recreation program, we visited each home. The



Bridge Over Troubled Waters (cont'd)

local people work late into the evening so it was about ten o'clock by the time the head of the village and the other people crowded into the hall and the program began. They enjoyed the folk dances and folk songs that were performed. I sensed that the church was the center of the community life.

In order to take part in this workcamp every Japanese participant had to learn to give a greeting in Korean but, as we had anticipated, language was our biggest problem. Everyone tried to understand the other person and get his or her own feelings across. One person, starting from zero, stretched out his hand. Another used gestures. Yet another tried to communicate with the help of English. Someone else used his stumbling Korean. None of these was enough, but this was the only way we had to understand each other and reach the point of being *chingu* (friends).

Piam Village was not more than 30 km from the 38th parallel so helicopters crossed overhead every day. One day we passed some soldiers in a labor battalion. One Korean student called out to a young man who was working, "Thank you for your hard work!" This was a student who was very anti-Japanese and from this standpoint anti-government. I realized that the students participating with us in the workcamp would be drafted this summer or next year for a three-year stint of military service.

URI (we) are only standing at both ends of a bridge to link Japan and Korea. Now the span connecting the two sides of the channel is only a dream. In the past many Japanese have crossed the channel to go to Korea. *What was their purpose?* Many Koreans have been forcibly brought to Japan. *Why did they have to go to a foreign land?* Now many people are crossing the channel, but the bridge is still an illusion.

I took part in this workcamp. I was able to feel the heartbeat of the Korean people who are fellow Asians. I cherish this experience. But for this very reason I am compelled by the idea that I must seek here in Japan where I stand to establish a base of hard rock and from this a span that will reach across to Korea.

KIM SHIN-CHUL:

I felt and learned many things through the workcamp at Piamri. I think the participation of students and other young people from the United Church of Christ in Japan made it especially significant.

I wondered if it isn't just young people who have that special characteristic of planning so much within the limits of a day only 24 hours long--Bible study, trying to grope together for what we must be about, and seeking to know one another well.

When we heard that in Japan, in contrast to Korea, less than one per cent of the population is Christian, we were quite surprised. But I felt that the Japanese took a very serious faith position toward the Bible and the Lord Jesus, and I became aware that the faith core I have held up to now is not enough.

To be very frank, the great majority of Koreans do not have very good feelings toward Japan. However, as we lived and talked together during this week, I came to feel that these attitudes must change. While it may be hard to judge the whole from just a few persons, nevertheless what I discovered on this occasion was that I must very clearly get rid of those hostile feelings.

Because of our language differences, although we could exchange simple greetings, we couldn't have real dialogue, and this was too bad. By real dialogue, I don't mean we have to take up extremely weighty matters but things that youth are concerned about.

We are all God's children. Because of this, we need the kind of hearts that can embrace one another in love and affection. By not hiding our feelings but expressing them openly, we can get to know each other and reconsider our own positions. This kind of URI (we-consciousness) is what we must achieve.

As we worked together in temperatures that sometimes went above 30° C, painting the church walls, repairing the road, mixing gravel and sand for cement, I think we came to the point of being able to think of ourselves as URI--brothers in Christ who help one another and work for one another. Even now as I think of those friends somewhere in Japan, who are included when I think of URI--*watashitachi*--we, I feel something warm in my heart.

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